

Chairman Young...Ranking Member Visclosky... members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the impacts of Continuing Resolution and Sequestration on your Marine Corps.

Speaking today principally as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, sequestration, by its magnitude, its timing, and its methodology, will have a devastating impact on our nation's readiness, both short and long term. Combined with the effects of the existing continuing resolution, sequestration creates unacceptable levels of risk in 4 main areas...first, *risk to our national strategy*...2<sup>nd</sup> - *risk to our forces*...3<sup>rd</sup> - *risk to our people*... and lastly, *risk to the United States of America*.

Regarding risk to our national strategy - Maintaining a sound international economic system and a just international order are the foundations of our nation's Defense Strategic Guidance. The effects of disruption to this global order can be seen in volatile energy prices, fluctuating global markets, unacceptable sovereign behavior...and economic decline. Failing to provide leadership in the collective security of this global order will have significant economic consequences for the American people.

Worse, a 'fiscally-driven lapse in American leadership and forward engagement' will create a void in which old threats will be left unaddressed and new security challenges will find room to grow. There should be no misunderstanding...the combined effects of Continuing Resolution and Sequestration will have a deleterious effect on the stability of global order...the perceptions of our enemies...and the confidence of our allies.

Sequestration, viewed solely as a budget issue...would be a grave mistake...bordering irresponsibility. Our collective actions in the next few months will be scrutinized on a global stage, where even 'the perception' of a disruption of our nation's willingness to protect its global interests can...and will have, strategic consequences.

Regarding Risk to our Forces - the linkage between resources and readiness is immediate and visible. The scale and agnostic implementation of sequestration will have devastating impacts on readiness. Sequestration will leave ships in port, aircraft grounded for want of necessary maintenance and flying hours, modernization programs cancelled, and units only partially trained and reset after 12 years of continuous combat.

Because of our special role as America's Crisis Response Force, Marines place a high premium on readiness. I have done everything in my authorities to date to preserve the tenets of a ready Marine Corps...I will continue to do so. Under continuing resolution I have kept deploying units ready, but only by stripping away the foundations of the long term readiness of the total force. While these short term adaptations are possible, the enduring effects of these decisions puts the future health and readiness of the force at risk. By the end of this year, more than 50% of my tactical units will be below minimum acceptable levels of readiness for deployment to combat. In a very real sense, we are eating our 'seed corn' to feed current demands, leaving less to plant for the long term capabilities of the force. This pattern inevitably leads to a hollow force, and its impacts are already being felt under the continuing resolution.

The most troubling and immediate risks are those that sequestration imposes on our people.

Sequestration does not hurt 'things,'...it hurts our 'people.' The qualitative edge that the American service-member takes to the battlefield is the fundamental advantage that differentiates our forces from our enemies. This qualitative combat edge will be severely eroded by the impacts of sequestration, leaving America's men and women with inadequate training...degraded equipment... and reduced survivability. While military pay and allowances have been exempted in this round of sequester, the quality of life for the All-Volunteer Force and their families will inevitably suffer as we reduce family programs and installation maintenance.

Our civilian Marines will likewise be impacted. 95% of our civilian workforce is employed outside the national capital region...they are the guards at our gates, our financial experts who help build and manage our budgets, our acquisition specialists, the therapists who treat our wounded, the experts who repair our equipment...and the teachers who teach our children. The economic impact to these families and their local communities are put at-risk by short-term furlough

or long term termination. *Protecting our ability to keep faith with our families and our wounded warriors is a top priority in my Marine Corps...but even this...the most sacred of responsibilities ...will be increasingly placed at risk under sequestration.*

In closing, allow me to articulate one more risk... risk to our nation. In the final analysis, sequestration potentially asks the most from those who have borne the greatest sacrifice. The effects of sequestration over the next 10 years will threaten the foundations of the all-volunteer force, putting the nation's security on a vector that is potentially ruinous. It will dramatically shape perceptions of our government as both an employer and as a customer, thereby reducing confidence throughout our institutions.

These are strategic matters that demand our immediate attention and action. I urge the committee to consider the full range of risks created by this legislation and a continuing CR, and ask for your assistance in mitigating them to the extent possible. Thank you...I look forward to the opportunity to answer your questions...